

AFRL engineer receives Outstanding Employees with Disabilities Award

Reported by Directed Energy Directorate

KIRTLAND AFB, N.M. — An Air Force Research Laboratory civilian employee has been honored as the Air Force recipient of the Department of Defense Outstanding Federal Employees with Disabilities Award for 1999.

Mark W. Gaddis, an electrical engineer in the directorate's Semiconductor Laser Branch, along with 15 other employees representing other services and agencies within the Department of Defense, received the award in a special pentagon ceremony in October.

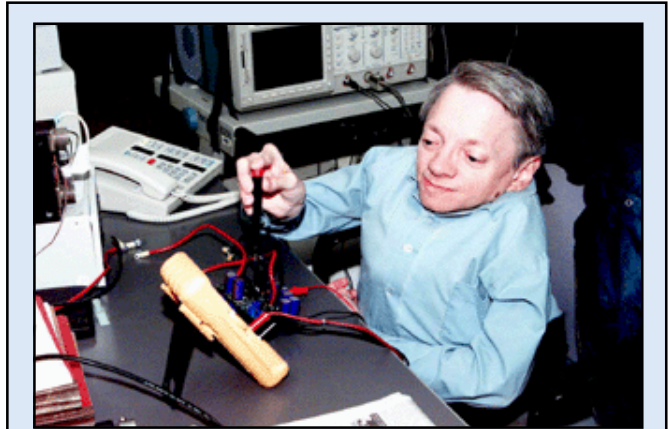
"Their extraordinary accomplishments show the importance of broadening the circle of inclusion in the workplace," said William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, about the award winners.

According to nomination, despite his severe physical limitations, Gaddis, a federal employee for 11 years, has established a tremendous reputation as an electrical engineer. Gaddis' superior knowledge, experience and dedication has resulted in great respect among his peers, the nomination said.

His circuit designs are found in the majority of laser prototype systems built by AFRL. A number of Gaddis' designs are in use by Air Force security forces and marketed to the civilian law enforcement community.

Gaddis, who was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, holds master's and bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering from the University of New Mexico. His patents include a grenade shell laser system, a highly efficient constant current laser driver, a highly efficient thermal electric cooler driver and a pocket laser communicator.

Within the last year, Gaddis has assumed responsibilities as lead engineer for the directorate's in-house helicopter illumination programs. He is the principle engineer supporting the laser systems on the battlefield optical surveillance system — a grouping of lasers, optics, sensors and commu-



JUST ANOTHER DAY ON THE JOB — Mark Gaddis calibrates a portable infrared laser driver at the Directed Energy Directorate. The Air Force Research Laboratory employee was the Air Force recipient of the Department of Defense Outstanding Federal Employees with Disabilities Award for 1999.

nications equipment mounted on a high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle, better known as a Humvee.

His knowledge and expertise allowed Gaddis to identify an Air Force Special Operations Command operational deficiency that will greatly benefit from helmet-mounted laser communications technology.

According to Dr. Earl Good, DOD director, "Mark does not view his significant physical disability as a hindrance...He contributes in every way possible, with an unequalled level of integrity and professionalism that brings credit and honor to the U.S. Government." @